

THE MANAGER

GENERATION NEXT

By Deborah Grusenmeyer

Developing the next generation of dairy industry employees, managers and owners can begin with dairy youth programs

Programs build future dairy leaders

The challenges: To create awareness in young people of career opportunities in dairy fields. To develop the skills necessary to be successful in those careers. And, finally, to attract high caliber young people to careers in the dairy industry. Meeting these challenges is essential for the future of the dairy industry.

A solution: Offer exciting, interesting programs for young people that open the door to dairy career opportunities and develop skills to meet the demands of those careers.

New York is fortunate to have a wealth of youth programs. Participants in regional dairy youth programs and the statewide Junior DAIRY LEADER program increase their knowledge of careers in the dairy field and develop personal and technical skills useful for college and careers.

Junior DAIRY LEADER

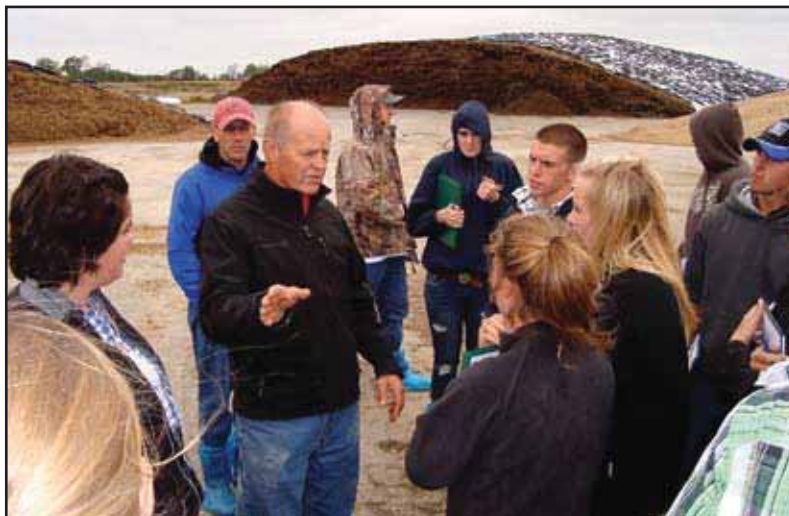
PRO-DAIRY's Junior DAIRY LEADER program, begun 12 years ago, is open to young people ages 16 to 19. The program's goals are to generate enthu-

siasm for the dairy industry and to build personal, professional and leadership skills. Participants build a network of other young people and dairy professionals, as well as learn about the diversity of career choices. The yearlong program exposes participants to different dairy herds, crop enterprises, agribusinesses and farm business management techniques.

The Junior DAIRY LEADER program consists of nine workshops beginning with a seven-day Wisconsin trip. Young people tour farms and attend the National 4-H Dairy Conference, held during World Dairy Expo.

Eight workshops follow throughout the year. Junior DAIRY LEADERS focus on team building, personality styles, change and leadership. As well, they explore specific dairy production topics such as health, nutrition and production management. Participants, for example, learn how to breed cows, increasing their knowledge of reproduction management. Other technical workshops include herd health and calf and heifer management.

Young people tour farms and agribusinesses and conduct on-farm production and business analyses. The DAIRY LEADERS's exposure to different management styles and ideas used on successful dairies and in agribusinesses broadens their knowledge of the industry. It also gives them tools they can use in their education and careers.



Junior DAIRY LEADER students meet with Wisconsin dairy producer Ken Buelow during their Wisconsin trip that also includes time at the National 4-H Dairy Conference and World Dairy Expo.

FYI

■ To learn more about the Junior DAIRY LEADER program, contact Deborah Grusenmeyer, PRO-DAIRY youth specialist. Tel: 607. 255.0656. Email: djc27@cornell.edu. A brochure and applications are available. Or go to the PRO-DAIRY website: www.ansci.cornell.edu/prodairy/ Click on Youth.

■ Junior DAIRY LEADER receives funding from the Agway Foundation, New York Farm Viability Institute, New York Center for Dairy Excellence, Cargill Animal Nutrition, Dehm Associates, Genex/CRI, Shur-Gain and Northeast AgEnhancement Grant program. Regional programs receive sponsorship from local businesses.

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Regional youth dairy programs

These programs lay a foundation for young people to build dairy careers:

■ **Dairy Prospects** is a one-year program for young people in grades 9 to 11 in Lewis and Jefferson counties. Held over several weekends during the school year, the program consists of hands-on workshops, job shadowing and educational trips to farm, agriservice businesses and agricultural colleges.

Young people discover the diversity of career options in the dairy industry, learn about management styles and develop skills helpful for success in college and careers.

"The program showed us how various aspects of agricultural businesses interact," says Stephanie Pierce, an Alexandria Bay student who now attends SUNY Morrisville for dairy management.

Contact: Joe Lawrence of Lewis County Cornell Cooperative Extension at jrl65@cornell.edu or Ronald Kuck of Jefferson County Extension. Email: rak76@cornell.edu

■ **Dairy Youth Explorers** is an opportunity for 13 to 18 year olds to spend a day or weekend a month from January through August exploring all facets of the dairy industry through hands-on activities and educational trips. The program is open to young people in Cattaraugus, Chautauqua and Allegany counties.

At the end of the program, students can intern at local dairy farms and agribusinesses during the month of July.

Contact: Lisa Kempisty of Chautauqua County Extension at ljk4@cornell.edu or Tom Parmenter of Allegany County Extension. Email: tdp6@cornell.edu.

■ **Dairy Vision** is open to 14 to 16 year olds in these counties: Saratoga, Schoharie, Washington, Fulton, Montgomery, Rensselaer and Columbia. The program begins with a team building weekend in the fall. It's followed with approximately eight sessions to learn about nutrition, finance and careers in agriculture.

Dairy Vision takes young people to farms in New York and New England to see how small, large, commercial and registered herds compete. The group also attends the Dairy Discovery Workshop at Cornell and holds a joint session with the Junior DAIRY LEADER group.

Dairy Vision has taken students on an extended trip to visit agricultural businesses and dairy farms in Vermont, Pennsylvania and northern New York. Participants do a presentation at graduation to demonstrate what they learned during the course of the program.

Contact: Mary Fairley of Saratoga County Cornell Cooperative Extension at mlf9@cornell.edu or Sandy Ferry with Farm Service Agency. Email: slferry77@gmail.com.

■ **STEM Camp**, held at Wyoming County's 4-H Camp

Impact statement

The Junior DAIRY LEADER program has successfully encouraged youth to further their education and pursue careers in agriculture. Here are a few facts from the program's first 11 years:

■ 98% of the 217 Junior DAIRY LEADER graduates continued their education beyond high school.

■ 87% have attended or are attending college to study agriculture.

■ Surveys show that program graduates are staying in or going into agriculture and dairy careers with better skills and greater knowledge. For example, 98% of participants increased their knowledge of dairy and 78% learned technical skills applicable to production management. Some 98% said in a survey that the program had a positive impact on their communication skills.

Wyomoco the first full week of July, offers 16 to 19 year olds a career discovery opportunity. (STEM is an acronym for Science, Technology, Engineering and Math.) Young people visit farms and businesses across the area to learn about milk quality, calf raising, animal health and nutrition, environmental protection, crop production, artificial insemination, lending and record keeping from 33 different presenters.

Contact: Shawn Tiede, Camp Wyomoco manager, at 585.786.2251. Or see the Camp's website: www.campwyomoco.com. Email Wyoming County Extension at srt28@cornell.edu.

Committed to youth

All the youth dairy programs profiled here encourage young people to explore careers in the dairy field, whether on farms, at academic institutions or with agribusinesses. They emphasize real-world experiences, student and industry interaction, and personal and professional development.

The programs reinforce the message that there are exciting and diverse opportunities in the dairy industry. The future of the dairy industry depends on how successfully this message is communicated to young people. □



Junior DAIRY LEADER students look for answers to a reproduction question during one of the program's nine sessions.